## What is claimed is:

- 1. A method of determining whether a subject is at increased risk for alcoholism, said method comprising:
- (a) administering to a subject a therapeutically effective amount of a GABA<sub>A</sub> receptor modulator and determining whether the subject is sensitive or insensitive to such GABA<sub>A</sub> receptor modulator;
- (b) subsequently administering a therapeutically effective amount of a GABA<sub>A</sub> receptor agonist and determining whether the subject is sensitive or insensitive to such GABA<sub>A</sub> agonist; and
- (c) correlating a decreased sensitivity to a GABA<sub>A</sub> receptor modulator and an increased sensitivity to a GABA<sub>A</sub> agonist with an increased risk of alcoholism in the subject.
- 2. The method of claim 1 wherein the GABA<sub>A</sub> receptor modulator is a benzodiazepine.
- 3. The method of claim 1 wherein the GABA<sub>A</sub> receptor agonist is gaboxadol or THIP.
- 4. The method of claim 2 wherein the benzodiazepine is Valium (diazepam), Activan (lorazepam), Midazolam, or Flunitrazepam.
- 5. The method of claim 4 wherein the dose range is from about 5 to about 20 mg.
- 6. The method of claim 3 wherein the dose range is from about 1 to about 3 mg/kg.

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7. A method of screening for a drug which decreases expression of the  $\alpha\beta_2\delta$  subunit of GABA, said method comprising:

- (a) isolating and culturing neurons;
- (b) applying a drug to the cultured neurons;
- (c) measuring the level of  $\delta$  subunit of GABA<sub>A</sub> from the treated neurons of step (b);
- (d) determining whether the drug applied in step (b) decreases expression of the  $\delta$  subunit of GABA<sub>A</sub> receptors; and
- (e) correlating a decrease in expression of the  $\delta$  subunit of GABAA receptors found in the treated neurons of step (b) when compared to a control neuron culture having no drug application, with the identification of a drug which decreases expression of  $\alpha_4\beta_2\delta$  GABAA receptors.
- 8 A method of screening for a drug which decreases expression of the  $\alpha_4\beta_2\delta$  subunit of GABA<sub>A</sub> receptor said method comprising: (a) expressing  $\alpha_4\beta_2\delta$  GABA<sub>A</sub> receptors in eukaryotic cells; (b) applying a drug to the eukaryotic cells of (a); (c)measuring the level of  $\delta$  subunit of GABA<sub>A</sub> from the treated eukaryotic cells of step (b); (d) determining whether the drug applied in step (b) decreases expression of the  $\delta$  subunit of GABA<sub>A</sub> receptors; and (e) correlating a decrease in expression of the  $\delta$  subunit of GABA<sub>A</sub> receptors found in the treated eukaryotic cells of step (b) when compared to a control eukaryotic cell population having no drug application, with the identification of a drug which decreases expression of  $\alpha_4\beta_2\delta$  GABA<sub>A</sub> receptors.
- 9 A drug that decreases expression of the  $\alpha_4\beta_2\delta$  subunit of GABA<sub>A</sub> and identified by the method of claim 7 or 8.

- 10. A method of treating a subject at risk for alcoholism, said method comprising administering a therapeutically effective amount of a drug of claim 7, 8, or 9.
- 11. A method for identifying a drug which blocks  $\alpha_4\beta_2\delta$  GABA receptors, said method comprising:
  - (a) isolating and culturing neurons;
  - (b) applying a drug to the cultured neurons of (a);
- (c) measuring GABA<sub>A</sub> gated currents at  $\alpha_4\beta_2\delta$  GABA<sub>A</sub> receptors in the treated neurons of (b); and
- (d) correlating a decrease in GABA<sub>A</sub>-gated currents recorded at  $\alpha_4\beta_2\delta$  GABA<sub>A</sub> receptors when compared to a control culture with no drug application, with the identification of a drug which blocks  $\alpha_4\beta_2\delta$  GABA<sub>A</sub> receptors.
- 12. A method for identifying a drug which blocks  $\alpha_4\beta_2\delta$  GABA receptors, said method comprising (a) expressing  $\alpha_4\beta_2\delta$  GABAA receptors in eukaryotic cells; (b) applying a drug to the eukaryotic cells of (a); (c) measuring GABAA gated currents at  $\alpha_4\beta_2\delta$  GABAA receptors in the treated eukaryotic cells of (b); and (d) correlating a decrease in GABAA-gated currents recorded at  $\alpha_4\beta_2\delta$  GABAA receptors when compared to a eukaryotic cell population having no drug application, with the identification of a drug which blocks  $\alpha_4\beta_2\delta$  GABAA receptors.
- 13. A drug which blocks  $\alpha_4\beta_2\delta$  GABA<sub>A</sub>receptors and identified by the method of claim 10, 11, or 12.
- 14. A method of treating a patient at risk for alcoholism, said method comprising administering a therapeutically effective amount of the drug of claim 11, 12 or 13.

- (a) administering to a subject a therapeutically effective amount of a GABAA receptor modulator and determining whether the subject is sensitive or insensitive to such GABAA receptor modulator;
- (b) subsequently administering a therapeutically effective amount of a GABAA receptor agonist and determining whether the subject is sensitive or insensitive to such GABAA agonist; and
- (c) correlating a decreased sensitivity to a GABA<sub>A</sub> receptor modulator and an increased sensitivity to a GABA<sub>A</sub> agonist with an increased risk of premenstrual anxiety in the subject.
- 16. The method of claim 15 wherein the GABA<sub>A</sub> receptor modulator is a benzodiazepine.
- 17. The method of claim 15 wherein the GABA<sub>A</sub> receptor agonist is gaboxadol or THIP.
- 18. The method of claim 16 wherein the benzodiazepine is Valium (diazepam), Activan (lorazepam), Midazolam, or Flunitrazepam.
  - 19. The method of claim 18 wherein the dose range is about 5-20 mg.
  - 20. The method of claim 17 wherein the dose range is about 1-3 mg/kg.
- 21. A method of treating a subject at risk for premenstrual anxiety, said method comprising administering a therapeutically effective amount of a drug of claim 7, 8, or 9.
- 22. A drug which blocks  $\alpha_4\beta_2\delta$  GABAA receptors and identified by the method of claim 11, 12 or 21.

- 23. A method of treating a patient at risk for premenstrual anxiety, said method comprising administering a therapeutically effective amount of the drug of claim 11, 12 or 13.
- 24. The method of claim 8 or 12 wherein the eukaryotic cells are *Xenopus laevis* oocytes, Chinese hamster ovary (CHO) cells, mouse fibroblast L929 cells, mouse L(-tk) fibroblast cell line, human embryonic kidney cells, green monkey kidney cells, or COS cells.